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ABSTRACT

The Florida Adult Homeless Literacy and Basic Skills Assistance Project was initiated in 1992 to provide literacy and basic skills training to at least 2,700 homeless Florida adults. In 1993, a limited evaluation of the project was conducted. Evaluation data were collected from reviews of 39 state and local documents, interviews with the program manager and 14 project staff members, 2 surveys of 7 local programs, and information presented about the project at 2 conferences and 3 meetings. The evaluation established that the program operated in a manner reasonably consistent with Florida's plan for the adult homeless literacy program and that local program coordinators were generally pleased with the program's operation at the local and state levels. The program served a total of 3,180 participants through 5 school districts, Florida Community College, and Religious Community Services, Inc. Of those adults served, 52.8% were Black, 33.6% were White, and 12.5% were Hispanic. More than half the participants were between the ages of 25 and 44. As a result of the program, 1,358 participants improved their basic skills, 2,207 acquired literacy and numeracy skills, 371 entered education or training, 169 obtained a job, and 23 obtained a better job. (MN)

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ED 367 811

Program Evaluation Summary

The Florida Adult Homeless Literacy and Basic Skills Assistance Project

1992-1993

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The Florida Adult Homeless Literacy and Basic Skills Assistance Project

Program Evaluation Summary

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This Document

This document contains a summary of major findings which resulted from a limited evaluation of the **Florida Adult Homeless Literacy and Basic Skills Assistance Project** as implemented by the Florida Department of Education during the 1992-93 funding period.

The client for this evaluation was the

- Bureau of Adult and Community Education
  Division of Vocational, Adult and Community Education
  Florida Department of Education
  325 Gaines Street
  Tallahassee, FL 32399.

The evaluator was Dr. Daniel L. Gardner. He is a program evaluation consultant and a member of the faculty of the College of Education, University of South Florida, Tampa.

This report was prepared to summarize findings available to the program evaluator as of **July 30, 1993**. It was prepared for use by the Florida Department of Education. It contains the following sections:

- Nature of the Program
- Description of the Evaluation Inquiry
- Major Findings
- Evaluator's Comments
- Appendices

In this report, the following acronyms and names will be used to represent respective entities.

- BACE - Bureau of Adult & Community Education
- DOE - Florida Department of Education
- Evaluator - Dr. Dan Gardner
- Program - Florida Adult Homeless Literacy and Basic Skills Assistance Project
- Local Program - the activities and strategies used by providers in addressing the purposes of the program
- Provider - the local agencies granted funds to provide services in support of the program
- Program Manager - the BACE employee assigned to monitor the program - Mr. Rick Lockenbach
- Program Coordinators - persons assigned by local providers to direct the day-to-day operation of the program
- USDOE - U. S. Department of Education

Nature of the Program

The following information was contained in the state of Florida proposal for funding during the 1992-93 period under the provisions of the federal *Adult Education for the Homeless Program.* It is presented here to provide the reader with an overview of the program

> *A Comprehensive Homeless Assistance Plan for the State of Florida* (19[illegible] istributed by the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, states that Florid[illegible] between 17,000 and 28,000 homeless on any given day and seventy percent (70%) of Florida's homeless are located in the state's seven largest metropolitan areas. This project targets the homeless in a holistic manner by utilizing an exemplary adult education delivery system, with the ability to provide continuity with vocational training and placement programs, employing effective outreach and needs assessment strategies coupled with referrals to a comprehensive network of social service agencies. No one particular group within the larger group of urban homeless has been targeted because of the great need and diversity of groups within the homeless population of these cities. Within that general target group, the subgrantees will target a number of more specific groups, and tailor their instruction to the needs of those particular groups, always with the goal of empowering the individual to assume a productive role in society.

Further, Florida's funding proposal contained these purposes.

> *Florida's Program Plan for Adult Education (1989-1993)* provides for the delivery of adult education services to at least 15% of the homeless adult population identified as needing basic or functional literacy skills. The purpose of this proposal is to continue providing adult literacy and basic skills assistance to homeless adults; to establish new projects in areas of the state where the largest numbers of homeless are found; and to create a prototypical homeless project based on the successes of subgrantees funded by this project and the commitment of Florida to serve this population.

The state level proposal defined two (2) goals and four (4) objectives for the project. These are listed below.

- Goal 1
  To provide literacy and basic skills training to a minimum of 2,700 homeless adults who are in need of basic or functional literacy skills in the state of Florida in the program year: January 1, 1992 - December 31, 1992.
  - Objective 1.1
    By January 1, 1992, award seven (7) subgrants to eligible agencies in the geographic areas with the highest concentration of homeless adults.
- Goal 2
  To maximize the quality and effectiveness of the activities funded through this project during the program year.
  - Objective 2.1
    Utilize an external, independent evaluation consultant.
  - Objective 2.2
    Increase public awareness of the need for literacy training and basic skill assistance for the homeless.
  - Objective 2.3
    Program specialist will provide technical assistance to subgrantees in establishing and maintaining quality projects.

The project was designed to support the delivery of client services through grants to eligible recipients including schools districts, community colleges, and public or private non-profit community-based organizations.

Description of the Evaluation Inquiry

This section describes evaluation purposes, objectives, questions, and data collection procedures.

Purposes of the Inquiry

This inquiry was directed at the following six (6) major purposes:

The evaluation will ...

- .. enable the DOE to comply with provisions of the grant between the state of Florida and the USDOE.
- .. demonstrate to the USDOE that the program had been evaluated by an external and independent program evaluation consultant.
- .. provide the BACE with information on the nature of local programs in addressing the major purposes of the program.
- .. provide the BACE with information to support decision-making about the implementation of local programs.
- .. assess, within given limitations, the impact of the program on program participants.
- .. initiate procedures which could be continued to support a longitudinal evaluation of Florida's Homeless Program.

Major Questions

The following major questions were addressed by this inquiry.

- What was the nature of the program as implemented?
- What was the nature of local programs as implemented?
- What was the impact of the program on the target population?
- What perspectives did local program coordinators have on the program?

Data Collection

The following methods were used to collect data for this inquiry.

- Review of state documents
- Review of local documents
- Review of other documents
- Interviews
- Surveys
- Review of reports
- Review of conference programs
- Participation in meetings

Table 1 summarizes the nature of data sources used for this inquiry.

Table 1
Frequency of Use of Data Sources

Method	Frequency
Review of state documents	11
Review of local documents	22
Review of other documents	7
Interviews	17
Surveys	14
Review of reports	14
Review of conference programs	2
Participation in meetings	3
Total	90

The extent to which each of these methods was utilized is described in the following sub-sections.

Review of state documents

Listed below are the four (4) DOE documents and seven (7) local program grant proposals reviewed by the evaluator:

- Florida's application for funds for the Adult Education for the Homeless Program
- a descriptive flyer entitled: *Adult Homeless Literacy Training and Basic Skills Assistance Project*
- a description of the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program
- Florida's Annual Performance Report for the Adult Education for the Homeless Program for fiscal year 1989-90
- Review of seven (7) funded grant proposals submitted by these local providers:
  - Broward County Public Schools
  - Dade County Public Schools
  - Florida Community College at Jacksonville
  - Hillsborough County Public Schools
  - Orange County Public Schools
  - Palm Beach County Public Schools
  - Religious Community Services, Inc. (Pinellas)

Review of local documents

These documents were reviewed by the evaluator:

- Broward Public County Schools
  Five (5) documents were reviewed
  - Annual Performance Report, 1992-93
  - a notebook entitled: *Broward Backpack: Adult Education for the Homeless Instructional Guide*
  - a flyer entitled: Homeless Survival Guide
  - Broward Backpack Individual Learning Plan
  - Survey submitted to Pelavin Associates, Inc.

- Dade County Public Schools
  Four (4) documents were reviewed.
  - Annual Performance Report, 1992-93
  - Report: *Project Re-Start; A Program for Homeless Adults, 1987-1990*
  - Project Re-Start Program Analysis, June 14, 1994 (student follow-up analysis)
  - Survey submitted to Pelavin Associates, Inc.
- Florida Community College at Jacksonville
  Two (2) documents were reviewed.
  - Annual Performance Report, 1992-93
  - Survey submitted to Pelavin Associates, Inc.
- Hillsborough Public County Schools
  Two (2) documents were reviewed.
  - Annual Performance Report, 1992-93
  - Survey submitted to Pelavin Associates, Inc.
- Orange County Public Schools
  Four (4) documents were reviewed.
  - Annual Performance Report, 1992-93
  - Adult Homeless Program Achievements, January 8, 1993
  - Video tape entitled: *Ashes to Diamonds Homeless Project*
  - Survey submitted to Pelavin Associates, Inc.
- Palm Beach County Schools
  Three (3) documents were reviewed.
  - Annual Performance Report, 1992-93
  - A booklet entitled: Project Home Team Survival Guide
  - Survey submitted to Pelavin Associates, Inc.
- Religious Community Services (Pinellas)
  Two (2) documents were reviewed.
  - Annual Performance Report, 1992-93
  - Survey submitted to Pelavin Associates, Inc.

Review of other documents

These documents were reviewed by the evaluator:

- Book published by the National Alliance to End Homelessness (1991) entitled: *What you can do to help the homeless*
- Book published by Krieger Publishing Company (1992) entitled: *Developing Literacy Programs for Homeless Adults*
- Education for Homeless Adults, the 1989-1990 Report, USDOE
- *Literacy Training for the Homeless: Guidelines for Effective Programs*, state of New York
- Progress Report, Study of Adult Education for the Homeless Program, Pelavin Associates, Inc., 1992
- State of Washington, Adult Homeless Education Program, Student Record
- Memorandum to State Adult Education for the Homeless Coordinators, from the USDOE, Subject: AEH Program Myths, dated April 21, 1992

Interviews

These interviews were conducted by the evaluator:

- The BACE program manager was interviewed by the evaluator on at least three (3) occasions in meetings and during telephone conversations.
- The evaluator interviewed fourteen (14) local program staff members on one or more occasions during six (6) interviews. Staff members supporting programs sponsored by the following agencies were interviewed:
  - Broward County Public Schools
  - Dade County Public Schools
  - Orange County Public Schools
  - Palm Beach County Public Schools
  - Religious Community Services, Inc. (Pinellas)

Surveys

Two (2) surveys were prepared, distributed, and compiled by the evaluator for each of the seven (7) local programs. A total of 14 responses were compiled by the evaluator:

- Survey - identification of homeless program staff members
- Survey of local program coordinators soliciting perspectives on the program

Review of reports

Two (2) reports were prepared, distributed, and compiled by the evaluator for each of the seven (7) local programs. A total of 14 responses were compiled by the evaluator:

- Quarterly performance reports
- Annual performance report

Review of conference programs

Programs for each of the following two (2) conferences were reviewed by the evaluator to identify meetings conducted for the program.

- Adult & Community Education Conference, Fort Lauderdale, Sept. 1992
- Florida Adult Literacy Conference, Tampa, March 1993

Participation in Meetings

The evaluator participated in two (2) meetings conducted by the BACE for the coordinators of local adult homeless programs. These were conducted at the following conferences:

- Adult & Community Education Conference, Fort Lauderdale, Sept. 1992
- Florida Adult Literacy Conference, Tampa, March 1993

The evaluator participated in one (1) concurrent session conducted for the program at the Florida Adult Literacy Conference, Tampa, March 1993.

Major Findings

This section presents major findings discerned by the evaluator in response to the evaluation questions listed below.

- What was the nature of the program as implemented?
- What was the nature of local programs as implemented?
- What was the impact of the program on the target population?
- What perspectives did local program coordinators have on the program?

Findings associated with each of these questions are presented in the following subsections.

Question:
What was the nature of the program as implemented?

Interviews and records revealed that the program was implemented inclusive of the following practices:

- An RFP was distributed and solicited proposals from local programs.
- Program funds were granted to organizations in the seven counties which were "targeted" in Florida's application for adult homeless funds.
- Funds were granted to three types of agencies including school districts, a community college, and a non-profit community-based organization.
- Program funds were granted to the following agencies.
  - Broward County Public School District
  - Dade County Public School District
  - Florida Community College at Jacksonville
  - Hillsborough County Public School District
  - Orange County Public School District
  - Palm Beach County Public School District
  - Religious Community Services, Inc. (a non-profit organization serving Pinellas County)
- Graphic #1 illustrates the location of these projects in Florida.

Graphic #1
Location of funded
Adult Homeless Literacy Programs in Florida
1992-1993

- Interviews revealed that local programs had been monitored by the BACE.
- Interviews and records revealed that local programs had been encouraged by the BACE to ...
  - develop cooperative relationships with community agencies to provide support services to the homeless,
  - provide literacy instruction which addressed the immediate needs of the adult homeless participants,
  - provide individualized instruction to the extent possible,
  - provide instruction related to affective needs of participants,
  - deliver services at sites located in or near homeless population clusters,
  - devise and use outreach methods to recruit students to the program,
  - link services to existing support services including shelters, soup kitchens, rehabilitation centers, and
  - follow-up on current and former participants.

Question:
What was the nature of local programs as implemented?

Interviews, program reports, and local program documents revealed the following about local programs.

- All of the seven local programs varied in configuration.
- All programs provided adult literacy instruction.
- All programs provided instruction in survival or life skills
- All programs referred participants to community services for assistance.
- All programs linked services to those provided by other community agencies.
- All recruited participants.

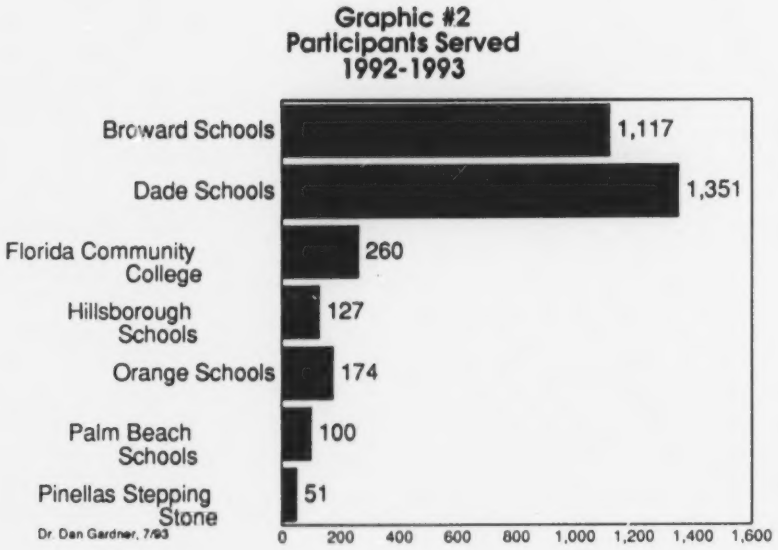
Question:
What was the impact of the program on the target population?

A review of reports submitted by local programs revealed the following.

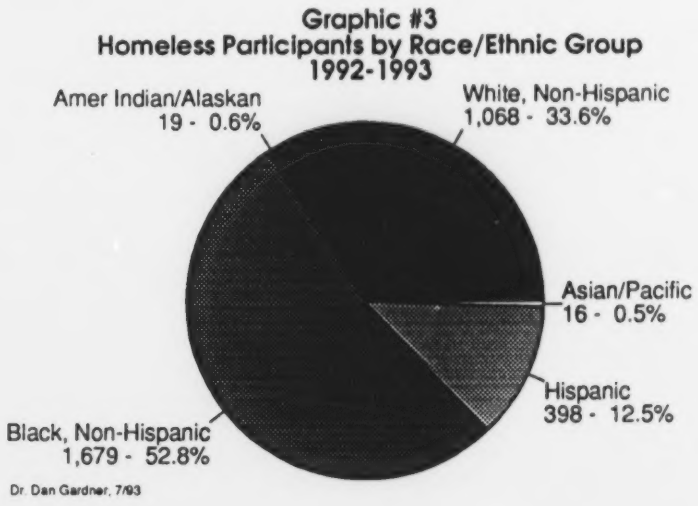
- A total of 3,180 participants were served by local programs. Table #2 presents the number of participants served by local programs. Graphic #2 illustrates this finding.

Table #2
Number of Participants Served by Local Program

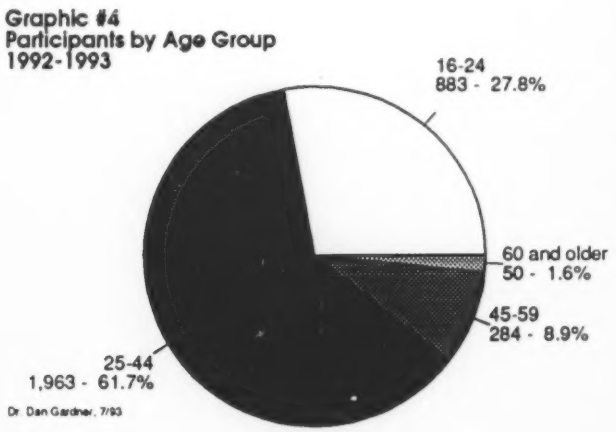
Agency	Number
Broward Schools	1,117
Dade Schools	1,351
Florida Community College	260
Hillsborough Schools	127
Orange Schools	174
Palm Beach Schools	100
Religious Community Services, Inc. (Pinellas)	51
Total	**3,180**



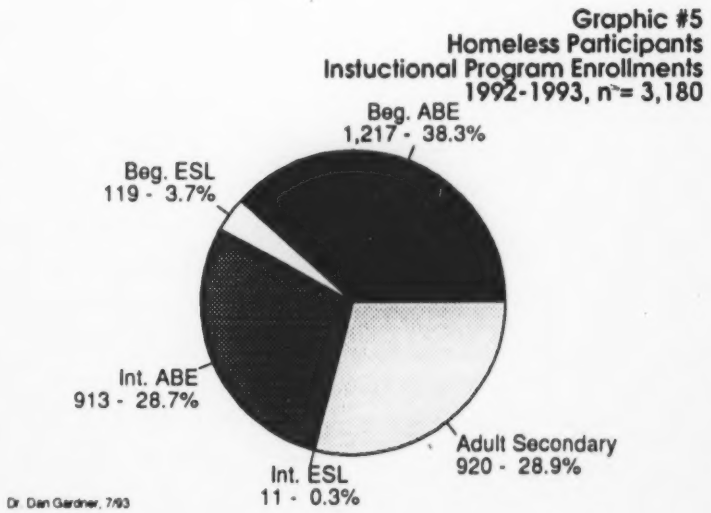
- The largest race/ethnic group served was "Black, Non-Hispanic." A total of 1,679 participants were classified in this group. This finding is illustrated in Graphic #3.



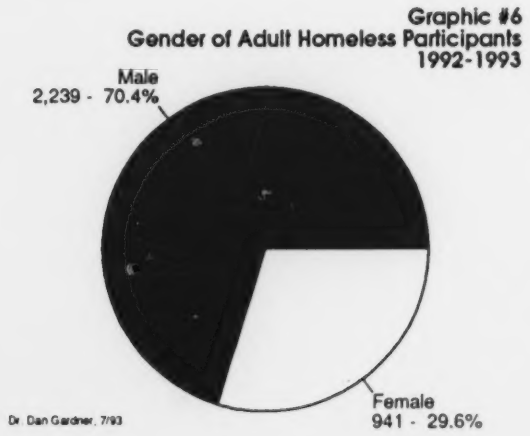
- More that half of the participants were 25 to 44 years of age. This finding is illustrated in Graphic #4.



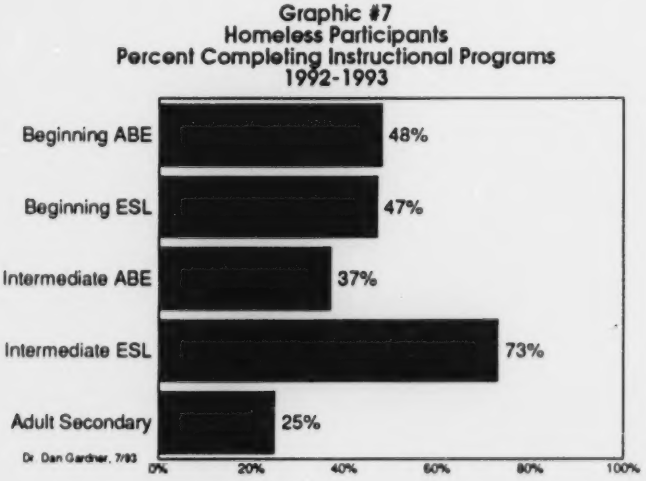
- About two - thirds of the participants were enrolled in adult basic education programs. Some participants were enrolled in English for speakers of other languages programs and adult secondary programs. This finding is illustrated in Graphic #5.



- Over 70% of the participants were male. This finding is illustrated in Graphic #6.

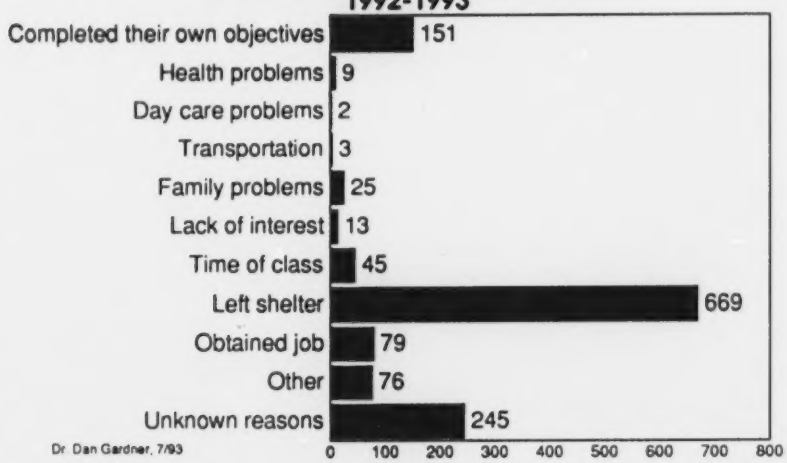


- The highest program completion rate was achieved by participants in "Intermediate ESL" while the lowest rate was among participants in the "Adult Secondary" program. This finding is illustrated in Graphic #7.



- Of those participants who left the program, most had not completed their objectives. This finding is illustrated in Graphic #8.

Graphic #8
Homeless Participants
Reasons for Leaving Adult Education
1992-1993



- Local programs reported a range of participant achievements. These are presented in Table #3.

Table #3
Achievements of Homeless Participants

Achievement	Total
Improved basic skills	1,358
Learned reading, writing, math	2,207
Obtained Adult High School Diploma	4
Passed GED	56
Completed Beg. ESL	115
Completed Int. ESL	10
Entered education or training	371
Obtained job	169
Obtained better job/salary	23
Removed from public assistance	6
Received US Citizenship	18
Registered to vote	154
Other - not specified	21

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Question:
What perspectives did local program coordinators have on the program?

Each of the seven (7) local program coordinators responded to a survey prepared and distributed by the evaluator. Responses were made to the following options:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Don't know
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Perspectives on the local program are presented in Table #4.

Table #4
Perspectives on the Local Program
Held by Local Program Coordinators
N=7

Item	Number Agree	Number Disagree
The organization of your local adult homeless project was appropriate.	6	1
Coordination of the adult homeless project by your agency was effective.	6	1
The local program was effective in involving local agencies to provide services to the homeless population.	6	1
Instructional services were effective in		
... improving literacy skills.	6	1
... improving life skills.	6	1
... improving employability skills.	6	1
... improving self esteem.	6	1
... use community resources for health services.	6	1
... use community resources for housing.	6	1

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Perspectives on the state level program are presented in Table #5.

Table #5
Perspectives on the State Level Program
Held by Local Program Coordinators
N=7

Item	Number Agree	Number Disagree
The organization of the state level adult homeless program by the Florida Department of Education (DOE) was appropriate.	5	2
Coordination of the statewide adult homeless project by the DOE was effective.	6	1
Staff development activities provided by the DOE for the adult homeless project were valuable for you.	6	1
Meetings conducted by the DOE for the adult homeless program helped you coordinate the local program.	6	1
The frequency of communication initiated by the DOE for the homeless program was appropriate to help you coordinate the local program.	6	1

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Evaluator's Comments

As a result of the evaluation activities report herein, the following observations were made by the evaluator.

- The program operated reasonably consistent with Florida's plan for the adult homeless literacy program.
- The number of participants served exceeded the number reflected in Florida's plan for the adult homeless literacy program.
- Local programs provided services consistent with Florida's plan for the adult homeless literacy program.
- Local program coordinators held favorable views of the operation of local and the state level program.

Daniel L. Gardner, Ed.D.
Program Evaluator
September 1993